

REFLECTIONS

October 2, 2005

"Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you this authority?"

Luke 20:2

Who's the Authority?

Recently during breakfast with a close friend the subject of the Bible came up. It always does in my conversations with this dear friend because we share a keen interest in Bible study and the thrill of discovery we gain from it.

The Bible is a complex book even to those who study it regularly. Among Biblical scholars there are many passages that are challenging to understand and that give rise to debate. Many of these debates arise from seeking to explain Biblical events within the earthly laws of science and nature. The origin of the world falls into that category.

The opening verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," offers no explanation for *how* God created it all, so the process He used in the creation presents a challenge to our understanding of natural laws. There are many other passages that are challenging too, like Noah and the flood, the day the sun stood still in the sky, Jonah and the great fish, and even the virgin birth of Jesus. Just as everyone else, I have an opinion on these challenges to natural laws. I believe that God created the heavens and the earth and in the process He established natural laws so everything will work on automatic pilot. And just as the pilot of an airplane can always override automatic controls, I believe that God can override the controls we know as natural laws. But some people choose not to view it that way.

So back to the conversation with my friend. As the two of us discussed the subject of Biblical inerrancy, he told me of a newspaper article he read. The journalist had written something like, "When I read the Bible and discover something I don't agree with I know that I am wrong. When some people read the Bible and discover something they don't agree with, they declare the Bible to be wrong."

So, who's the authority? Is the Bible right and I am wrong? Is the Bible wrong and I am right? Or are my differences with the Bible suggesting that I need to understand more?

I'll leave those questions for your own reflections.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +